

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASMARA 00193 111916Z

62-60

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OC-05 CCO-00 OCL-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 PM-03 DODE-00

SCS-03 SCA-01 SCCT-01 SY-04 OPR-01 SS-15 NSC-05 /064 W

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FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0000

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

COMIDEASTFOR IMMEDIATE

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA IMMEDIATE

DIRNSA (NSOC) IMMEDIATE

COMNAVTELCOMM IMMEDIATE

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0193

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, ET, US

SUBJECT: ELECTRICITY FROM KAGNEW AND ASMARA CITY

1. I WAS APPROACHED AFTERNOON FEB. 10 BY ATO GHEBRA OF  
ETHIOPIAN LIGHT AND POWER AUTHORITY (ELPA) ON QUESTION OF POWER

PAGE 2 RUEOIAA0193 C O N F I D E N T I A L

FOR ASMARA FROM KAGNEW. LT. JERRY HYATT, OIC, NAVCOMMU AND MR.  
ROBERT BAKER, PROJECT MANAGER OF CISCO WHO RESPONSIBLE FOR OPERA-  
TION KAGNEW POWER PLANT, PARTICIPATED IN DISCUSSION. ELPA NOW CONTROLS

FORMER PRIVATELY OWNED POWER FACILITY, SEDAO, WHICH HAS BEEN  
NATIONALIZED. ATO GHEBRA WAS ACCOMPANIED BY FORMER HEAD OF SEDAO  
AND AN ENGINEER.

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PAGE 02 ASMARA 00193 111916Z

2. GHEBRA STATED THAT MAIN SEDAO POWER PLANT AT BELEZA, 10 KM,  
NORTH OF ASMARA RENDERED INOPERATIVE BY JAN 31 INSURGENT ACTIVITY.

UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, PLANT WOULD TAKE 2-3 MONTHS TO REPAIR IF PARTS AVAILABLE FROM EUROPE. UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES WITH FIGHTING GOING ON AROUND BELEZA, AND IN VIEW NATIONALIZATION SEDAO

WITH CONSEQUENT DISRUPTION NORMAL CREDIT AND SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS, VOTAGE CAN BE CONSIDERED INDEFINITE. GENERATORS THEMSELVES NOT DAMAGED BUT CONTROL PANELS, CABLE, PIPING, FUEL PUMP COMPLEX, BOILER CONTROLS, AND BOTH FUEL TANKS DESTROYED. ONE FUEL TANK STILL BURNING; OTHERS BURNED OUT. BELEZA FACILITY HAD PROVIDED APPROX. 10,000 KW.

3. AS EMERGENCY MEASURE GHEBRA SAID ELPA PRESENTLY HAS WORK CREWS

PAGE 3 RUEOIAA0193 C O N F I D E N T I A L

ATTEMPTING TO REPAIR POWER LINE FROM MASSAWA TO ASMARA. INSURGENTS LARGELY CONTROL AREA BETWEEN ASMARA AND GHINDA, ABOUT HALFWAY TO MASSAWA. EVEN IF REPAIRED, LINE COULD EASILY BE CUT AGAIN. IN ANY EVENT, IF LINK WITH MASSAWA CAN BE MAINTAINED, A MAXIMUM OF ABOUT 5,000 KW CAN THEORETICALLY BE DRAWN DOWN TO PROVIDE FOR HOUSEHOLD AND SOME LIGHT INDUSTRY. REALISTICALLY, HOWEVER, ONLY ABOUT HALF THIS OUTPUT CAN BE EXPECTED AS MASSAWA ITSELF MUST BE SUPPLIED AND GENERATORS CANNOT BE RUN CONTINUOUSLY AT FULL POWER. ALL POWER SOURCES DISCUSSED SO FAR DELIVER 50 CYC., 110V CURRENT.

4. AS ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY MEASURE, GHEBRA SAID THAT ELPA AS AGENCY OF EPMG, WANTS TO ARRANGE TO DRAW ON KAGNEW SURPLUS POWER TO HELP SUPPLY ASMARA CITY. HE SAID ELPA AND SEDAO TECHNICIANS WHO HAD VISITED KAGNEW PLANT, INSPECTED IT, AND HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH PA&E PERSONNEL NOW OPERATING PLANT, ARE SATISFIED THAT IT TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE TO HOOK KAGNEW SYSTEM INTO CITY NET. OF COURSE, AS KAGNEW POWER 60 CYC., IT COULD NOT BE FED INTO NET RECEIVING 50 CYC. CURRENT FROM MASSAWA, BUT WOULD HAVE TO SERVE ISOLATED PORTION OF CITY. HE SAID ELPA RECEIVING ADVICE FROM SIEMENS, ADDIS, ON DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OF REGULATING USE OF 60 CYC. CUR-

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ASMARA 00193 111916Z

PAGE 4 RUEOIAA0193 C O N F I D E N T I A L

RENT WHERE APPLIANCES AND INSTALLATIONS DESIGNED FOR 50 CYC. GHEBRA SAID THAT ONCE USG AGREES, HOOK-UP WOULD TAKE ABOUT 2 WEEKS. FIGURED WORK WOULD INCLUDE INSTALLATION OF ABOUT 800 METERS OF HEAVY UNDERGROUND CABLE. IT WOULD BE A HIGHLY VISIBLE OPERATION.

5. I TOLD GHEBRA THAT I APPRECIATED THE PROBLEM AND WOULD REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS IMMEDIATELY AS I HAD NO AUTHORITY TO TAKE SUCH ACTION. HE ASKED THAT A DECISION BE REACHED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

6. COMMENT: HUMANITARIAN NEEDS STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT WE TRY TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE AND AGREE TO PROVIDE POWER AS REQUESTED. HOWEVER, IF AS APPEARS CLEAR, MAJOR GOAL OF INSURGENTS IS TO DENY POWER AND WATER TO ASMARA, THEN KAGNEW POWER FACILITY WILL BECOME INSURGENT TARGET AS SOON AS WE BEGIN DELIVERY POWER TO CITY. AS FEB. 7 AND FEB. 10 INSURGENT ATTACKS ON TRACT E DEMONSTRATE, ETH ARMY UNABLE PREVENT HIT AND RUN ATTACK WITH ROCKETS BY INSURGENTS AT ANY TIME. FUEL SUPPLY OF KAGNEW CAN, OF COURSE, BE DENIED BY INSURGENTS.

PAGE 5 RUEOIAA0193 C O N F I D E N T I A L

7. RECOMMENDATION: IN VIEW ABOVE, IF DECISION IS MADE FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS TO PROVIDE POWER AS REQUESTED, IN ORDER TO AVOID ENDANGERING AMERICAN LIVES ALL US PERSONNEL SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY

WITHDRAWN FROM REMAINING U.S. OCCUPIED SECTION OF TRACT E, WHERE POWER PLANT LOCATED, TO TRACT B. OPERATION OF POWER PLANT SHOULD BE TURNED OVER TO ELPA AND AMERICANS UTILIZED ONLY DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS ON SHORT CRASH TRAINING PROGRAM WHILE KAGNEW PLANT BEING HOOKED INTO CITY NET. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD AMERICANS CONTINUE TO WORK AT PLANT AFTER POWER BEGINS TO BE DELIVERED TO ASMARA CITY. IN ADDITION, NO PUBLICITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO SITUATION AND WE SHOULD ENDEAVOR, TO GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, TO MAKE IT APPEAR THE RESULT OF EPMG FORCE

MAJEURE. NO RPT NO ADDITIONAL AMERICANS SHOULD BE SENT TO ASMARA IN CONNECTION THIS PROJECT. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DRAW POWER AS  
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PAGE 04 ASMARA 00193 111916Z

NECESSARY AND POSSIBLE FROM KAGNEW STATION UNDER ELPA MANAGEMENT AND WITH ENTIRELY LOCAL WORK FORCE. IF THIS PROVES IMPRACTICAL, WE CAN FALL BACK ON OUR STANDBY POWER FACILITIES AT THE VARIOUS TRACTS. WE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO MAKE SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ETHIOPIANS TO MAINTAIN THE WATER PUMPING AND PURIFICATION PLANT AT KAGNEW.

PAGE 6 RUEOIAA0193 C O N F I D E N T I A L

8. IF WE ATTEMPT TO SUPPLY POWER TO ASMARA WHILE U.S. NATIONALS STILL OPERATING KAGNEW POWER PLANT, A TRAGIC LOSS OF LIFE COULD RESULT.

SHERRY

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ELECTRIC POWER, COMBAT OPERATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 FEB 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975ASMARA00193  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 26 JUN 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <26 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <10 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ELECTRICITY FROM KAGNEW AND ASMARA CITY  
**TAGS:** PINT, PINS, PFOR, ET, US, KAGNEW STATION  
**To:** STATE ADDIS ABABA  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006